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The delay in the publication of his biography will explain why the name of Dr. Manasseh Cutler is not more familiar to the historical students of the Northwestern States, and has not hitherto been associated with the origin and history of the Ordinance of 1787.

WILLIAM FREDERICK POOLE.

ART. II. — *Native Races of the Pacific States*. By HUBERT HOWE BANCROFT. New York: D. Appleton & Co. — *Civilized Nations*, Vol. II.

THE first accounts of the pueblo of Mexico created a powerful sensation in Europe. In the West India Islands the Spanish discoverers found small Indian tribes under the government of chiefs; but on the continent, in the Valley of Mexico, they found a confederacy of three Indian tribes under a more advanced but similar government. In the midst of the valley was a large pueblo, the largest in America, surrounded with water, approached by causeways; in fine, a water-girt fortress impregnable to Indian assault. This pueblo presented to the Spanish adventurers the extraordinary spectacle of an Indian society lying two ethnical periods back of European society, but with a government and plan of life at once intelligent, orderly, and complete. There was aroused an insatiable curiosity for additional particulars, which has continued for three centuries, and which has called into existence a larger number of works than were ever before written upon any people of the same number and of the same importance.

The Spanish adventurers who captured the pueblo of Mexico saw a king in Montezuma, lords in Aztec chiefs, and a palace in the large joint-tenement house occupied, Indian fashion, by Montezuma and his fellow-householders. It was, perhaps, an unavoidable self-deception at the time, because they knew nothing of the Aztec social system. Unfortunately it inaugurated American aboriginal history upon a misconception of Indian life which has remained substantially unquestioned to the present hour. The first eyewitnesses gave the keynote to

this history by introducing Montezuma as a king, occupying a palace of great extent and crowded with retainers, in the midst of a grand and populous city over which, and much beside, he was reputed master. But king and kingdom were in time found too common to express all the glory and splendor the imagination was beginning to conceive of Aztec society; and emperor and empire gradually superseded the more humble conception of the conquerors.

At this late day an enthusiasm and an industry great enough to produce the five volumes entitled "The Native Races of the Pacific States" inspire our respect. Enthusiasm coupled with industry has performed great work for mankind in all ages; but when controlled by a glowing and unguarded imagination, there is danger, as these volumes witness, of a misconception of the materials under treatment, of inflation, of exaggeration, of delusive theories, and of false conclusions. It is an ungracious task to point out, from a sense of duty, old errors herein reproduced and re-endorsed, and thus come into antagonism with an author for whom his critic can but feel a sentiment of respect.

In the second volume of this work, with which alone this article will be concerned, the high and mighty emperor of the Aztecs, whose supposed subjects must have numbered, the Tezucans and Tlacopans included, nearly two hundred and fifty thousand Red Indians, and the great Aztec empire, which covered an area as large as the whole State of Rhode Island, are again brought magnificently before our astonished minds.*

* The Valley of Mexico, including the adjacent mountain slopes and excluding the area covered by water, was about equal to the State of Rhode Island, which contains thirteen hundred square miles; an insignificant area for a single American Indian tribe. But the Confederacy had subdued a number of tribes southward and southeastward from the valley as far as Guatemala, and placed them under tribute. Under their plan of government it was impossible to incorporate these tribes in the Aztec Confederacy, the barrier of language furnished an insuperable objection; and they were left to govern themselves through their own chief, and according to their own usages and customs. As they were neither under Aztec government nor Aztec usages, there is no occasion to speak of them as a part of the Aztec Confederacy, or even as an appendage of its government. The power of this Confederacy did not extend a hundred miles beyond the Valley of Mexico on the west, northwest, north, northeast, or east sides, in each of which directions they were confronted by independent and hostile tribes.

The population of the three confederate tribes was confined to the valley, and did

There is even a plethora of empires, kings, and lords in this volume,—for example, the Toltec empire, the Chichemec empire, and the Aztec empire, one after the other; the Votan empire and the Quiche empire in the little territory of Guatemala; the kings of Tezcuco, the kings of Tlacopan, the kings of Michoacan, the kings of Tollan, and other kings as thick as blackbirds; besides princes, “nobles, gentry, plebeians, and slaves,”* *ad nauseam*. All the grand terminology of the Old World, created under despotic and monarchical institutions during several thousand years of civilization, to decorate particular men and classes of men, has been lavished by our author with American prodigality upon plain Indian sachems and war-chiefs, without perceiving that thereby the poor Indian was grievously wronged, for he had not invented such institutions nor formed such a society as these terms imply.

This work, it must be admitted, is in entire harmony with the body of works on Spanish America. It embodies their extravagances, their exaggerations, their absurdities, and runs beyond them in fervor of imagination and in recklessness of statement. A psychological fact, which deserves a moment's notice, is revealed by these works, written as they were with a desire for the truth and without intending to deceive. These writers ought to have known that every Indian tribe in America was an organized society, with definite institutions, usages, and customs, which, when ascertained, would have perfectly explained its government, the social relations of the people, and their plan of life. Indian society could be explained as completely and understood as perfectly as the civilized society of Europe or America, by finding its exact organization. This, strange to say, was never attempted, or at least never accomplished, by any one of these numerous and volu-

not probably exceed two hundred and fifty thousand souls, if it equalled that number, which would give nearly twice the present population of New York to the square mile, and a greater population to the square mile than Rhode Island now contains. The Spanish estimates of Indian populations were gross exaggerations. Those who claim a greater population for the Valley of Mexico than that indicated will be bound to show how a barbarous people, without flocks and herds and without field agriculture, could have sustained in equal areas a larger number of inhabitants than a civilized people armed with these advantages.

* Civilized Nations, p. 124.

minous writers. To every author, from Cortes and Bernal Diaz to Brasseur de Bourbourg and Hubert H. Bancroft, Indian society was an unfathomable mystery; and their works have left it a mystery still. Ignorant of its structure and principles, and unable to comprehend its peculiarities, they invoked the imagination to supply whatever was necessary to fill out the picture. When the reason, from want of facts, is unable to understand and therefore unable to explain the structure of a given society, imagination walks bravely in and fearlessly rears its glittering fabric to the skies. Thus, in this case, we have a grand historical romance, strung upon the conquest of Mexico as upon a thread; the acts of the Spaniards, the pueblo of Mexico, and its capture, are historical, while the descriptions of Indian society and government are imaginary and delusive. These picturesque tales have been read with wonder and admiration, as they successively appeared, for three hundred and fifty years; though shown to be romances, they will continue to be read, as Robinson Crusoe is read, not because they are true, but because they are pleasing. The psychological revelation is the eager, undefinable interest aroused by any picture of ancient society. It is felt by every stranger when he first walks the streets of Pompeii, and, standing within the walls of its roofless houses, strives to picture to himself the life and the society which flourished there eighteen hundred years ago. In Mexico the Spaniard found an organized society several thousand years further back of their own than Pompeian society, in its arts, institutions, and state of advancement. It was this revelation of a phase of the ancient life of mankind, which possessed, and still possesses, such power to kindle the imagination and inspire enthusiasm. It caught the imagination and overcame the critical judgment of Prescott, our most charming writer; it ravaged the sprightly brain of Brasseur de Bourbourg; and it carried up in a whirlwind our author at the Golden Gate.

The appearance of this work just as it is, and the commendation it has received from our critical journals, reveal with painful distinctness the fact that we have no science of American Ethnology. Such a science, resting as it must upon verified facts, and dealing with the institutions, arts, and inventions,

usages and customs, languages, religious beliefs, and plan of government of the Indian tribes, would, were it fairly established, command as well as deserve the respect of the American people. With the exception of an amateur here and there, American scholars have not been willing to devote themselves to so vast a work. It may be truly said, at this moment, that the structure and principle of Indian society are but partially known, and that the American Indian himself is still an enigma among us. The question is still before us, as a nation, whether we will undertake the work of furnishing to the world a scientific exposition of Indian society, or leave it as it now appears, crude, unmeaning, unintelligible, a chaos of contradictions and puerile absurdities. With a field of unequalled richness and of vast extent, with the same Red Race in all the stages of advancement indicated by three great ethnical periods, namely, the status of savagery, the Lower status of barbarism, and the Middle status of barbarism,* more persons ought to be found willing to work upon this material for the credit of American scholarship. It will be necessary for them to do as Herodotus did in Asia and Africa, to visit the native tribes at their villages and encampments, and study their institutions as living organisms, their condition, and their plan of life. When this has been done from the region of the Arctic Sea to Patagonia, Indian society will become intelligible, because its structure and principles will be understood. It exhibits three distinct phases, each with a cult peculiar to itself, lying back of civilization, and back of the Upper status of barbarism; having very little in common with European society of three hundred years ago, and very little in common with American society of to-day. Its institutions, inventions, and customs find no analogues in those of civilized nations, and cannot be explained in terms adapted to such a society. Our later investigators are doing their work more and more on the plan of

* Indian tribes below the art of pottery, as a number of coast tribes in North and South America, were in savagery; tribes practising this art, as the tribes of the United States east of the Mississippi, but ignorant of the use of adobe bricks and stone in house architecture, were in the Lower status of barbarism; and those tribes who constructed houses of adobe bricks and of stone, but who were ignorant of iron, as the tribes of New and Old Mexico, Central America, and Peru, were in the Middle status of barbarism.

direct visitation ; and I make no doubt a science of American Ethnology will yet come into existence among us, and rise high in public estimation from the important results it will rapidly achieve. Precisely what is now needed is the ascertainment and scientific treatment of this material.

After so general a condemnation of Spanish and American writers, so far as they represent Aztec society and government, some facts and some reasons ought to be presented to justify the charge. Recognizing the obligation, I propose to question the credibility of so much of the second volume of "The Native Races," and of so much of other Spanish histories as relate to two subjects, — the character of the house in which Montezuma resided, which is styled a palace ; and the account of the celebrated dinner of Montezuma, which is represented as the daily banquet of an imperial potentate. Neither subject, considered in itself, is of much importance ; but if the accounts in these two particulars are found to be fictitious and delusive, a breach will be made in a vital section of the fabric of Aztec romance, now the most deadly encumbrance upon American Ethnology.

It may be premised that there is a strong probability, from what is known of Indian life and society, that the house in which Montezuma lived was a joint-tenement house of the aboriginal American model, owned by a large number of related families, and occupied by them in common as joint-proprietors ; that the dinner in question was the usual single daily meal of a communal household, prepared in a common cook-house from common stores, and divided, Indian fashion, from the kettle ; and that all the Spaniards found in Mexico was a simple confederacy of three Indian tribes, the counterpart of which was found in all parts of America.

It may be premised further, that the Spanish adventurers who thronged to the New World after its discovery found the same race of Red Indians in the West India Islands, in Central and South America, in Florida, and in Mexico.* In their

* " But among all the other inhabitants of America there is such a striking similitude in the form of their bodies, and the qualities of their minds, that notwithstanding the diversities occasioned by the influence of climate, or unequal progress in improvement, we must pronounce them to be descended from one source." — *Robertson's History of America*, Law's ed., p. 69.

mode of life and means of subsistence, in their weapons, arts, usages, and customs, in their institutions, and in their mental and physical characteristics, they were the same people in different stages of advancement. No distinction of race was observed, and none in fact existed. They were broken up into numerous independent tribes, each under the government of a council of chiefs. Among the more advanced tribes, confederacies existed, which represented the highest stage their governmental institutions had attained. In some of them, as in the Aztec confederacy, they had a principal war-chief, elected for life or during good behavior, who was the general commander of the military bands. His powers were those of a general, and necessarily arbitrary when in the field. Behind this war-chief — noticed, it is true, by Spanish writers, but without explaining or even ascertaining his functions — was the council of chiefs, “the great council without whose authority,” Acosta remarks, Montezuma “might not do anything of importance.”* The civil and military powers of the government were in a certain sense co-ordinated between the council of chiefs and the military commander. The government of the Aztec confederacy was essentially democratical, because its organization and institutions were so. If a more special designation is needed, it will be sufficient to describe it as a military democracy.

The Spaniards who overran Mexico and Peru gave a very different interpretation of these two organizations. Having found, as they supposed, two absolute monarchies with feudal characteristics, the history of American Indian institutions was cast in this mould. The chief attention of Europeans in the sixteenth century was directed to these two governments, to which the affairs of the numerous remaining tribes and confederacies were made subordinate. Subsequent history has run in the same grooves for more than three centuries, striving diligently to confirm that of which confirmation was impossible. The generalization was perhaps proper enough, that if the institutions of the Aztecs and Peruvians, the most advanced Indian tribes, culminated in monarchy, those of the Indian tribes

* The Natural and Moral History of the East and West Indies, Lond. ed., 1604, Grimstone's Trans., p. 485.

generally were essentially monarchical, and therefore those of Mexico and Peru should represent the institutions of the Red Race.

It may be premised, finally, that the histories of Spanish America may be trusted in whatever relates to the acts of the Spaniards, and to the acts and personal characteristics of the Indians ; in whatever relates to their weapons, implements, and utensils, fabrics, food, and raiment, and things of a similar character. But in whatever relates to Indian society and government, their social relations and plan of life, they are wholly worthless, because they learned nothing and knew nothing of either. We are at full liberty to reject them in these respects, and commence anew ; using any facts they may contain which harmonize with what is known of Indian society. It was a calamity to the entire Red Race that the achievements of the Village Indians of Mexico and Central America, in the development of their institutions, should have suffered a shipwreck so nearly total. The only remedy for the evil done them is to recover, if possible, a knowledge of their institutions which alone can place them in their proper position in the history of mankind.

In order to understand so simple an event in Indian life as Montezuma's dinner, it is necessary to know certain usages and customs, and even certain institutions of the Indian tribes generally, which had a direct bearing upon the dinner of every Indian in America at the epoch of the Spanish conquest. Although it may seem strange to the reader, it requires a knowledge of several classes of facts to comprehend this dinner ; because it is necessary to rid the mind of a fictitious account before another can be substituted. For this purpose, and within the necessary limits of this article, I shall endeavor to explain, in outline, the following institutions and customs which were substantially universal in the Indian family, and therefore existed, presumptively, among the Aztecs. Reference will also be made to what is known of their existence and practice among the latter. They are the following : —

1. The organization in gentes, phratries, and tribes.
2. The ownership of lands in common.
3. The law of hospitality.
4. The practice of communism in living.
5. The

communal character of their houses. 6. Their custom of having but one prepared meal each day,—a dinner. 7. Their separation at meals, the men eating first, and the women and children afterwards.

Since the writers upon Aztec affairs did not consider any of these subjects worthy of investigation except the second, it is necessary to show their general prevalence in other Indian tribes to create a probability of their prevalence among the Aztecs, as well as to give effect to such traces of their existence among the latter as these writers have incidentally furnished. The necessity for this lengthy process is entailed upon us by the imperfection of the Spanish accounts.

1. *The Organization in Gentes, Phratries, and Tribes.*

The gentile organization opens to us one of the oldest and most widely prevalent institutions of mankind. It furnished the nearly universal plan of government of ancient society, Asiatic, European, African, Australian, and American. It was the instrumentality by means of which society was organized and held together. Commencing in savagery, and continuing through the three sub-periods of barbarism, it remained until the establishment of political society, which did not occur until after civilization had commenced. The Grecian gens, phratry, and tribe, the Roman gens, curia, and tribe, find their analogues in the gens, phratry, and tribe of the American aborigines. In like manner, the Irish sept, the Scottish clan, the phrara of the Albanians, and the Sanskrit *ganas*, without extending the comparison further, are the same as the American Indian gens, which has usually been called a clan. As far as our knowledge extends, this organization runs through the entire ancient world upon all the continents, and it was brought down to the historical period by such tribes as attained to civilization.

It is necessary to know the character and prevalence of this organization among the Indian tribes as a means of understanding Aztec society. The Iroquois, whose system is perfectly known, will afford the best illustration. The Seneca Iroquois tribe is composed of eight gentes. A gens is a body of consanguinei, the members of which bear a common gen-

tile name, as Wolf, Bear, Beaver, Turtle, etc. With descent in the female line, as among the Iroquois, the gens is composed of a supposed female ancestor and her children, together with the children of her female descendants in perpetuity. It includes this ancestor and her children, the children of her daughters and the children of her female descendants, while the children of her sons and the children of her male descendants are excluded. The latter belonged to the gentes of their respective mothers. A moiety only of the descendants of the supposed ancestor belong to the gens. When descent is in the male line, as it was among the Greeks, and among the Mayas of Yucatan, the gens is composed of a supposed male ancestor and his children, together with the children of his sons, and the children of his male descendants in perpetuity, while the children of his daughters, and the children of his female descendants would belong to other gentes.

Each gens had its own sachem and one or more chiefs elected from among its members. The office of sachem was hereditary in the gens, in the sense that it was filled as often as a vacancy occurred, while the office of chief was non-hereditary, because it was bestowed in reward of merit, and died with the individual. We thus distinguish two primary grades of chiefs, of which all other grades were varieties. A son could not be chosen to succeed his father, where descent was in the female line, because he belonged to a different gens, and no gens would accept a sachem or chief from any gens but its own. The office passed from brother to brother, or from uncle to nephew ; but, as all male cousins were brothers under their system of consanguinity, the person chosen was not necessarily an own brother ; and as all the sons of a person's female cousins were his nephews, the nephew chosen was not necessarily the son of an own sister of the deceased sachem. This rule is mentioned because the Aztec succession was precisely the same as the Iroquois ; the office held by Montezuma passing from brother to brother or from uncle to nephew. Assuming the existence of Aztec gentes, with descent in the female line, the Aztec succession is perfectly intelligible.

The gens was individualized by the following rights, privileges, and obligations :—

- I. The right of electing its sachem and chiefs.
- II. The right of deposing its sachem and chiefs.
- III. The obligation not to marry in the gens.
- IV. Mutual rights of inheritance of the property of deceased members.
- V. Mutual obligations of help, defence, and redress of injuries.
- VI. The right of bestowing names upon its members.
- VII. The right of adopting strangers into the gens.
- VIII. A common burial-place.
- IX. A council of the gens.

Want of space precludes an exposition of these characteristics. All the members of the gens were free, and bound to defend each other's freedom; they were all equal in position and in personal rights, the sachem and chiefs claiming no superiority; and they were a brotherhood bound together by the ties of kin. Liberty, equality, and fraternity, though never formulated, were cardinal principles of the gens. These facts are material, because the gens was the unit of their social and governmental system, the foundation upon which Indian society was organized. A structure composed of such units would of necessity bear the impress of their character; for as the unit, so the compound. It serves to explain that sense of personal independence universally an attribute of Indian character. Such and so substantial was the character of the gens as it anciently existed among the American aborigines, and as it still exists in full vitality in many Indian tribes. Upon the gentes rested the phratry, the tribe, and the confederacy of tribes. Three thousand Senecas divided among eight gentes would give an average of three hundred and seventy-five persons to a gens.

Next in the ascending scale of organization is the phratry, consisting of a certain number of gentes reunited in a higher association for certain common objects. The Senecas were in two phratries, each consisting of four gentes, of which those in the same phratry were styled brother gentes to each other, and cousins to the other four. This organization was for social and religious rather than governmental objects. The Cayuga, Onondaga, and Tuscarora tribes had each the same number of gentes, united in the same number of phratries,

while the Oneida and the Mohawk tribes had but three gentes each, and no phratries.

The third stage of organization is the tribe. It is composed of a number of gentes of common lineage, all the members of which speak the same dialect. The tribe held an independent territory, bore a tribal name, and possessed a government administered by a council of chiefs. Out of the gens came the chief, and out of the union of the gentes in a tribe came the council, composed of the chiefs of the gentes. It was the instrument of government, and the only one known to the American aborigines. The great body of the Indian tribes were organized in gentes, precisely like those of the Iroquois, and the phratry is still found among a number of them. Their government was purely social, dealing with persons through their relations to a gens and tribe, and perfectly simple when examined as an organization.

Fourth and last is the confederacy of tribes, which was the ultimate stage of organization, and the highest to which the aborigines attained. It was composed of tribes speaking dialects of the same stock language, the tribes having been formed by the segmentation of an original tribe. Subdivision, followed by separation in area and divergence of speech, would leave each tribe in possession of the same gentes, and with a dialect of the same language, which furnished the elements of union upon which confederacies were formed, and by means of which they were made possible. The Iroquois Confederacy consisted of five tribes, afterwards increased to six, each occupying an independent territory, and remaining under the government of its own council in whatever related to the tribe individually. They were also under the government of a general council of the confederacy in whatever related to their common interests as united tribes.

The council of sachems consisted of fifty members, taken from certain gentes of the several tribes. The offices were hereditary in these gentes, but elective among their members. When a vacancy occurred by the death of a sachem in any tribe, a council of the decedent's gens was convened to elect his successor, in which all the adult male and female members of the gens were entitled to vote. After they had made a choice it

was still necessary that the remaining gentes should accept or reject the nomination. They met for this purpose by phratries. If either of them refused to accept the nominee, his nomination was thereby set aside, and the gens proceeded to make another choice. When the choice made by the gens had been accepted by the phratries, it was still necessary that the new sachem should be "raised up," to use their expression, and invested with his office by the council of the confederacy. Until the ceremony of investiture was performed he could not assume the duties of a sachem. Thus carefully were the rights and the independence of the people guarded in the choice of their sachems and chiefs, the latter obtaining office in much the same manner. Moreover, the gens had power to depose both sachem and chiefs, if for any reason they became unacceptable. This, in a few words, is the whole theory of the office of an Indian chief, an office found in every tribe of the American aborigines, and springing naturally from the gens.

War-chiefs were common in the Iroquois tribes, but when the confederacy was formed they experienced the necessity for a general commander of the forces of the confederacy. Two principal war-chiefs were accordingly created instead of one, both being assigned to the Seneca tribe. They were made hereditary in the Wolf and Turtle gentes, among whose members they were elected like the sachem, and were raised up in the same manner.

The same office reappears among the Aztecs, and was held by Montezuma. It is probable that it was hereditary in a particular gens, and elective among its members, like the office of principal war-chief among the Iroquois. The blazon on the house occupied by Montezuma was an eagle, which of itself creates a presumption that he belonged to the Eagle gens. An elective office implies a constituency; but what was the constituency in this case? We are told there were six electors, four Aztec, one Tezcucan, and one Tlacopan; but who made the electors? Again we are told that it was the prerogative of the incumbent of the office to appoint the six electors to name his successor. This is not the theory of an elective Indian office, and is, moreover, improbable on its face. Historians have not given an exposition of the structure of Aztec society.

For aught that appears the people were an unorganized rabble. An emperor, with lords and nobles, judges, captains, and municipal functionaries appear, — a multitude of officers of all grades, but with no organized society behind them to whom they were responsible. How these men came into their offices, and the tenure by which they were held, is left a mystery. Montezuma appointed them, they would have us believe, because it so easily disposes of the difficulty. But they have mentioned two facts which may enable future investigators to solve the problem of Montezuma's election. It appears that the Aztecs occupied their pueblo in four divisions, precisely as the Tlascalans occupied theirs, each in a distinct quarter, called the four quarters of Mexico. It seems highly probable that these divisions were four Aztec phratries. These again are represented by Tezozomoc and Herrera as falling into subdivisions. It is equally probable that these subdivisions were so many gentes. Each of these subdivisions, as will be shown, held lands in common. When a people organized in gentes, phratries, and tribes gather in a town or city, they settle locally by gentes and tribes, — a necessary consequence of their social organization. The Grecian and Roman gentes and tribes settled in their cities in this manner. For example, the three Roman tribes were organized in gentes and curiæ (ten gentes in a curiæ, and ten curiæ in a tribe), the curia being the analogue of the phratry; and they settled locally at Rome by gentes, by curiæ, and by tribes. The Ramnes occupied the Palatine Hill, the Titians were mostly on the Quirinal, and the Luceres mostly on the Esquiline. If the Aztecs were organized in gentes and phratries, having but one tribe, they would of necessity be found in as many quarters as they had phratries, with each gens of the same phratry in the main locally by itself. The fact that the Aztec office of war-chief passed from brother to brother or from uncle to nephew is confirmed by two elections under the eyes of the Spaniards. Montezuma was succeeded by his brother Cuitlahua, and the latter was succeeded by his nephew Guatemozin. The same thing is known to have occurred in a number of previous successions. It may therefore be suggested as a probable explanation of the mode of election that the office was hereditary

in a gens by the members of which the choice was made. Their nomination was then submitted for acceptance or rejection to the four Aztec phratries, and also to the Tezcucans and Tlacopans, who were directly interested in the selection of the confederate commander. When each had considered and confirmed the nomination, they appointed a person to express their concurrence, whence the six electors. Their function was to compare the votes of their constituents, and if they agreed to announce the result. This is submitted as a conjecture upon the fragments of evidence remaining, but it is seen to harmonize with Indian usages, and with the theory of the office of an elective Indian chief. It may also be mentioned that Montezuma was deposed for cowardice while a prisoner in the hands of Cortes, and his brother Cuitlahua put in his place. Herrera's account makes this a plain and necessary inference,* thus showing that the power which elected and deposed from office was constantly present. It also implies an organized society, and expresses the vitality of the social system.

Recurring to the Iroquois organization, it may be remarked that the gens was founded upon kin, the phratry upon the kinship of the gentes, the tribe upon dialect, and the confederacy upon stock language. It resulted in a gentile society, fundamentally different from political society, resting upon territory and upon property. It will be noticed further, that the institutions of the Iroquois were essentially democratical, — a fact that will ultimately be found true of every tribe and confederacy of the American aborigines.

Other confederacies existed beside the Iroquois; among which may be mentioned the Creek Confederacy of six tribes, the Powhattan Confederacy, of which but little is known, the Ottawa Confederacy of three tribes, the Dakota League of the Seven Council Fires, the Confederacy of the Seven Moqui Pueblos in New Mexico, and the Aztec Confederacy of three tribes. Traces of the same organization are found in parts of New and Old Mexico, Central and South America.

It remains to show the prevalence of the gentile organization in America by a reference to the tribes where its exist-

* History of America, Lond. ed., 1725, Stevens Trans., l. c. ii. 66.

ence has been ascertained. The Wyandotes are composed of eight gentes in two phratries, the Creeks of twenty-two gentes, the Cherokees of eight, the Choctas of eight in two phratries, and the Chickasas of twelve in two phratries; the Delawares are composed of three gentes, the Munsees of three, the Mohegans of eleven in three phratries, the Abenakis of ten, the Ojibwas of twenty-three, the Potawattamies of fifteen, the Miamis of ten, the Shawnees of thirteen, the Sauks and Foxes of fourteen, the Blood Blackfeet of five, and the Piegan Blackfeet of eight; the Pankas are composed of eight gentes, the Omahas of twelve, the Iowas of eight, the Otoes and Missouris of eight, the Winnebagoes of eight, and the Mandans of seven; the Minnatares of seven, and the Crows of thirteen. The Pawnees are supposed to have six, and the Comanches six; but the fact has been but partially ascertained. On the Northwest Coast the Thlinkets are composed of ten gentes in two phratries, and the Moqui Pueblo Indians of New Mexico of nine gentes. Mr. E. B. Tylor has traced the same organization among the Arawaks of British Guiana, and the Guaranees of Brazil.* Herrera speaks of the division of the Peruvian tribes into clans;† and mentions the fact of descent in the female line among the tribes of the Maranon.‡ He also presents certain facts which establish the existence of gentes among the Mayas of Yucatan, the most advanced Village Indians in North America.§ The "lineage," and the "kindred" so frequently mentioned in his pages as a feature of the social condition of widely separated tribes in North and South America, require the organization into gentes for their explanation. From the evidence adduced it is rendered highly probable that this organization was anciently universal in the Indian family.

A single question remains: whether the Aztecs were organized in gentes and phratries. In the first place we find three Indian tribes united in a confederacy, which gives the two upper members of the organic series. They presuppose the first and second, the gens and the phratry. In the second place we find the Aztecs in four local divisions, answering to as many phratries, and these again in subdivisions, answering

* Early History of Mankind, p. 287.

† Ib. 377.

‡ Hist. of America, IV. 231.

§ Ib. 171.

to as many gentes. In the third place there was an Aztec council of chiefs. This presupposes as many gentes at least as there were members of this council ; since no way is known of explaining the existence of an Indian chief or sachem except through a gens. And lastly, the Aztec, Tezcucan, and Tlacopan tribes, speaking dialects of the Nahuatlac language, are not distinguishable from the other tribes of American aborigines. Far from differing, they were precisely like all other tribes in the external manifestations of their organization, which was simply that of chiefs and people.

2. *The Ownership of Lands in Common.*

Among the Iroquois the public domain was owned by the tribe in common. A person who cultivated land had a possessory right to its use as long as he chose to occupy it ; and upon his death it passed like his personal property to his gentile heirs. This in general was the land tenure of the Northern tribes. The Aztecs, who were one ethnical period in advance of the latter, had carried their land system one degree further. Their lands were divided into three principal parts, one of which was set off for the support of the government, one for the support of religion, and the remainder was reserved for the support of the people, in their social subdivisions. Clavigero remarks that "the lands which were called *Altepetlalli*, that is, those of the communities of cities and villages, were divided into as many parts as there were districts in a city, and every district possessed its own part entirely distinct from and independent of every other. These lands could not be alienated by any means whatever" ;* and he adds in a footnote that the royal laws grant to every Indian village or settlement the territory which surrounds them "to the extent of six hundred Castilian cubits." The "communities of villages," each situated by itself, and owning their lands in common, suggest the gens. The Spanish grants were to the community in common, and were probably founded upon this ancient land-tenure of the aborigines. While the Iroquois held by tribes, the Aztecs held by gentes.

The land-tenure of the Peruvians was analogous. Garci-

* History of Mexico, Phila. ed., 1817, Cullen's Trans., II. 141.

lasso de la Vega, quoting from Blas Valera, remarks that the lands were "divided into three parts, and applied to different uses. The first was for the Sun, his priests and ministers; the second was for the king, and for the support and maintenance of his governors and officers. . . . And the third was for the natives and sojourners of the provinces, which was divided equally according to the needs which each family required.*

While these several statements may not present the exact case either in Mexico or Peru, they sufficiently indicate the ownership of land by communities of persons, probably gentes, with a system of tillage which points to large households. Neither the Aztecs nor any American Indian tribe had attained to a knowledge of the individual ownership of land in fee simple. The knowledge belongs to the period of civilization. There is not the slightest probability that any Aztec owned a foot of land which he could call his own, with power to sell and convey in fee to whomsoever he pleased.

3. *The Law of Hospitality.*

Among the Iroquois, if a man entered an Indian house in any village, it was the duty of the women of the house to set food before him. An omission to do this would have been a discourtesy amounting to an affront. If hungry, he ate; if not, courtesy required that he should taste the food and thank the giver. This would be repeated at every house he entered, and at whatever hour of the day. As a custom it was upheld by a rigorous public sentiment. Lewis and Clarke refer to the same practice among all the tribes of the Missouri. "It is the custom," they remark, "of all the nations of the Missouri to offer every white man food and refreshment when he first enters their tents."† This was simply applying to

* Royal Commentaries of Peru, Lond. ed., 1688, Rycant. Trans., p. 154. Herrera remarks concerning their tillage and common stores as follows: "The Spaniards drawing near to Caxamalca began to have a view of the Inca's army, lying near the bottom of a mountain. . . . They were pleased to see the beauty of the fields, most regularly cultivated, for it was an ancient law among these people that all should be fed out of common stores, and none should touch the standing corn." — *History of America*, IV. 249.

† Travels, Longman's ed., 1814, p. 649.

their white visitors their rule of hospitality among themselves. It tended to equalize subsistence, and while any household possessed a surplus to prevent destitution in any portion of the community. This law of hospitality was universal among the Northern tribes, and it seems to have been universal in the Indian family. It was made possible by their communism in living.

In every part of America which they visited, the Spaniards, although in numbers as a military force, were assigned quarters in Indian houses emptied of their inhabitants for that purpose, and were freely supplied with provisions. Thus, at Tlascala, Cortes and his men "were generously treated, and supplied with all necessaries." * Again, "they entered Cholula, and went to a house where they lodged altogether in safety, and their Indians with them, although upon their guard, being for the present plentifully supplied with provisions." † Although, with their Indian allies, they numbered some two thousand persons, they found accommodations in a single communal or joint tenement-house of the aboriginal American model. Speaking of the Indians of Yucatan, Herrera remarks that "they are still generous and free-hearted, so that they will make everybody eat that comes into their houses, which is everywhere practised in travelling." ‡ This is a fair statement of the Iroquois law of hospitality among the Mayas. Pizarro found the same custom among the Peruvians and other tribes of the Andes. When on the coast of Tumbez, and before landing, "ten or twelve floats were immediately sent out with plenty of provisions." § When he had entered Peru, "Atahualpa's messengers came and presented the governor with ten of their sheep from the Inca, and some other things of small value; telling him very courteously that Atahualpa had commanded them to inquire what day he intended to be at Caxamalca, that he might have provisions on the way." || These illustrations, which might be multiplied, are sufficient to show the hospitality extended to the Spaniards.

It was an active, well-established custom of Indian society, practised among themselves, and towards strangers from other

* Herrera, *Hist. of Amer.*, II. 279.

† *Ib.* II. 311.

‡ *Ib.* IV. 171.

§ Herrera, III. 399.

|| *Ib.* IV. 244.

tribes, and therefore naturally extended to the people who now for the first time appeared among them. Considering the numbers of the Spaniards, and another fact which the aborigines were quick to notice, namely, that a Spaniard consumed and wasted five times as much as an Indian required, their hospitality in many cases must have been grievously overtaxed.*

Attention has been called to this law of hospitality, and to its universality, for two reasons, — because it implies the existence of common stores which supplied the means for its practice, and because, wherever found, it also implies communistic living in large households. It must be evident that supplies could not have been furnished by the Iroquois, and other Northern tribes, to visitors and to strangers; much less by the Village Indians of Mexico, Central and South America, to the Spanish forces, with such uniformity, if the custom had depended in each case upon the contributions of single families. In that event it would have failed oftener than it would have succeeded. The law of hospitality, as administered by the American tribes, indicates a plan of life among them which has entirely escaped historical notice. Its explanation must be sought in the ownership and cultivation of lands in common, and in the distribution of their produce to households in which communism was practised. Common stores for large households, and possibly for the village with which to maintain its hospitality, are necessary to explain the practice. It could have been maintained on such a basis; and it is difficult to see how it could be maintained on any other.

4. *The Practice of Communism in Living.*

This, again, may be illustrated by Iroquois usages. In their villages they constructed houses, fifty, eighty, and a hundred feet in length, with a hall through the centre, a door at each end, and with the interior partitioned off at intervals of about seven feet. Each apartment or stall thus formed was open on the hall side. Such houses would each accommodate from ten to thirty families. These households were made up on the principle of kin. The married women and their children be-

* "The appetite of the Spaniards appeared to the Americans insatiably voracious, and they affirmed that the Spaniards devoured more food in a day than was sufficient for ten Americans." — *Robertson's History of America*, p. 72.

longed to the same gens, the symbol of which was often painted upon the house, while their husbands belonged to several other gentes. It was thus made up, in the main, of gentile kindred, and presents a general picture of Indian life in all parts of America. Whatever was gained by any member of the household on hunting or fishing expeditions, or raised by cultivation, was made a common stock. Within the household they lived from common stores. After the daily meal was cooked at the several fires, the matron of the household was summoned, and it was her duty to divide the food from the kettle to the several families according to their respective needs. What remained was placed in the custody of another person until it was required by the matron.

Mr. Caleb Swan, who visited the Creek Indians in 1790, remarks that "the smallest of their towns have from twenty to forty houses, and some of the largest from a hundred and fifty to two hundred that are tolerably compact. These houses stand in clusters of four, five, six, seven, and eight together; . . . each cluster of houses contains a clan or family, who eat and live in common." * Lewis and Clarke, speaking of the tribes of the Columbia, observe that "their large houses usually contain several families, . . . among whom the provisions are common, and whose harmony is scarcely ever interrupted by disputes." † The Spanish writers do not mention the practice of communism among the Village Indians of Mexico and Central America. They are barren of practical information concerning their mode of life. A direct modern illustration of the practice among the Mayas of Yucatan is given by Mr. Stephens. At Nohacacab, a short distance east of the ruins of Uxmal, there is a settlement of Maya Indians, whose communism in living was noticed by Mr. Stephens when among them to employ laborers. He remarks that "their community consists of a hundred labradores or working-men; their lands are held in common, and the products are shared by all. Their food is prepared at one hut, and every family sends for its portion; which explains a singular spectacle we had seen on our arrival,—a procession of women and children, each

* Schoolcraft, *Hist. Cond. and Pros. of Indian Tribes*, V. 262.

† *Travels*, p. 443.

carrying an earthen bowl containing a quantity of smoking hot broth, all coming down the same road, and disappearing among the different huts. . . . From our ignorance of the language . . . we could not learn all the particulars of their internal economy, but it seemed to approximate that improved state of association which is sometimes heard of among us; and as this has existed for an unknown length of time, and can no longer be considered experimental, Owen and Fourier might perhaps take lessons from them with advantage." * A hundred working-men indicate a total of five hundred persons depending for their daily food upon a single fire, the provisions being supplied from common stores, and divided from the kettle. It is probably a truthful picture of the life of their forefathers in the House of the Nuns and in the Governor's House at Uxmal at the period of European discovery. The communism of the Aztecs is illustrated by Montezuma's dinner.

5. *The Communal Character of Indian Houses.*

This important subject can only be glanced at. In an article prepared for Johnson's *Cyclopædia* on the "Architecture of the American Aborigines," to which reference is made, I have presented the ground-plans of the houses of the principal Indian tribes for the purpose of showing that the principle of communism in living entered into and determined their character. From the houses of the Northern Indians, each large enough for several families, to the adobe and stone houses of the Village Indians of New Mexico, each containing from fifty to five hundred apartments, and to the houses of dressed stone on elevated platforms at Uxmal, Chichen-Itza, and Palenque, all alike were joint-tenement houses. These ground-plans show that they were designed to be occupied by groups, composed, probably, of related families, whose sections were separated from each other by solid partition walls. Whenever Indian families are gathered in large households, the latter practice communism.

The houses of the Aztecs were no exception to the rule. Their size led the Spaniards to describe the largest of them as palaces, and thus they have formed a part of the staple of

* Incidents of Travel in Yucatan, II. 14.

Aztec romance. On the march to Mexico, Cortes and his four hundred men, with some hundreds of Indian allies, found accommodations in single houses of the kind described. Thus, having "come down into the plain, they took up their quarters in a country house that had many apartments."* "At Iztapalapa he was entertained in a house that had large courts, upper and lower floors, and very delightful gardens. The walls were of stone, the timber work well wrought. There were many and spacious rooms, hung with cotton hangings extraordinary rich in their way."† The house in which Montezuma lived will be elsewhere referred to.

6. *The Custom of having but one prepared Meal each Day, — a Dinner.*

This again may be illustrated by the usages of the Iroquois, who had but one cooked meal each day. It was as much as their resources and organization for housekeeping could furnish, and was as much as they needed. It was prepared and served before the noonday hour (ten or eleven o'clock), and may be called a dinner. At this time the principal cooking for the day was done. After its division at the kettle, it was served in earthen or wooden bowls to each person. They had neither tables, nor chairs, nor plates, nor any room in the nature of a dining-room or kitchen, but ate as best suited them, the men first, and the women and children afterwards. That which remained was reserved for any member of the household when hungry. Towards evening the women cooked hominy, the maize being pounded into bits the size of a kernel of rice, which, when boiled, was put aside to be used as a lunch in the morning or at evening, and for the entertainment of visitors. They had neither a breakfast nor a supper. Each person, when hungry, ate of whatever food the house contained. This is also a fair picture of Indian life in general in America when discovered.

Although the Village Indians were one ethnical period in advance of the Iroquois, there can be little doubt that their mode of life in this respect was precisely the same. Among the Aztecs we know that a dinner was provided about midday,

* Herrera, II. 320.

† Ib. II. 325.

but have no knowledge of an Aztec breakfast or supper. One prepared meal each day was as much as their mode of life permitted, or rendered necessary.* Civilization, with its diversified industries, its multiplied products, and its monogamian family, affords a breakfast and supper in addition to a dinner, but these are no older than civilization itself. Clavigero attempts to invest the Aztecs with a breakfast, but he incontinently gives up the supper. "After a few hours of labor in the morning," he observes, "they took their breakfast, which was most commonly *atolli*, a gruel of maize, and their dinner after midday; but among all the historians we can find no mention of their supper."* The "gruel of maize" spoken of as the Aztec breakfast suggests the hominy of the Iroquois, which like it was probably kept prepared as a lunch for the hungry. There is no reason for supposing that there was a prepared breakfast among the Aztecs, or any gathering of the household for a morning repast.

7. *The Custom under which the Men ate first and by themselves, and the Women and Children afterwards.*

This usage has been noticed so generally among the Indian tribes that I believe it may be said to have been universal among them. It was a consequence of the rudeness of their mode of life and of that imperfect appreciation of the female sex which appertains to their stage of advancement. Yet, from what is known of their house-life, of the production of their food, and of the management of their affairs, they were indebted for their material progress to their women,—patient, industrious, and hardy, whose virtues have never been celebrated.

Robertson states the usage as general: "They must approach their lords with reverence, they must regard them as more exalted beings, and are not permitted to eat in their presence."† The Spanish writers afford but little direct information upon this subject. Herrera remarks that "the women of Yucatan are rather larger than the Spanish, and generally have good faces, . . . but they would formerly be drunk at their festivals, though they did eat apart."‡ And Sahagun, speaking

* History of Mexico, II. 262.

† History of America, p. 78.

‡ Herrera, History of America, IV. 175.

of the ceremony of baptism among the Aztecs, observes that "to the women, who ate apart, they did not give cacao to drink."* At the dinner of Montezuma a practical illustration is afforded of this usage, the men eating first and by themselves.

If the reader has had sufficient patience to follow the exposition, in outline, of the foregoing institutions, usages, and customs, it will enable him to understand, in a general sense, the houses of the Aztecs, and the dinner of an Aztec household, which remain to be considered.

Not a vestige of the ancient pueblo of Mexico (Tenochtitlan) remains to assist us to a knowledge of its architecture. Its structures, which were useless to a people of European habits, were speedily destroyed to make room for a city adapted to the wants of a civilized race. We must seek for its characteristics in contemporary Indian houses which still remain in ruins, and in such of the early descriptions as have come down to us, and then leave the subject with but little accurate knowledge. Its situation, partly on dry land and partly in the waters of a shallow artificial pond formed by causeways and dikes, led to the formation of streets and squares, which were unusual in Indian pueblos, and gave to it a remarkable appearance. "There were three sorts of broad and spacious streets," Herrera remarks; "one sort all water with bridges, another all earth, and a third of earth and water, there being a space to walk along on land and the rest for canoes to pass, so that most of the streets had walks on the sides and water in the middle."† Many of the houses were large, far beyond the supposable wants of a single Indian family. They were constructed of adobe brick and of stone, and plastered over in both cases with gypsum, which made them a brilliant white; and some were constructed of a red porous stone. In cutting and dressing this stone flint implements were used.‡ The fact that the houses were plastered externally leads us to infer that they had not learned to dress stone and lay them in courses. It is not certainly established that they had learned the use of a mortar of lime and sand. In the final attack and capture, it is said that

* *Historia General*, Lib. IV. c. 36.

† *History of Mexico*, II. 361.

‡ *Clavigero*, II. 238.

Cortes, in the course of seventeen days, destroyed and levelled three quarters of the pueblo, which demonstrates the flimsy character of the masonry. Some of the houses were constructed on three sides of a court, like those on the Rio Chaco in New Mexico, others probably surrounded an open court or quadrangle, like the House of the Nuns at Uxmal; but this is not clearly shown. The best houses were usually two stories high, an upper and lower floor being mentioned. The second story receded from the first, probably in the terraced form. Clavigero remarks that "the houses of the lords and people of circumstance were built of stone and lime. They consisted of two floors, having halls, large court-yards, and the chambers fitly disposed; the roofs were flat and terraced; the walls were so well whitened, polished, and shining, that they appeared to the Spaniards when at a distance to have been silver. The pavement or floor was plaster, perfectly level, plain, and smooth. . . . The large houses of the capitol had in general two entrances, the principal one to the street, the other to the canal. They had no wooden doors to their houses."* The house was entered through doorways from the street, or from the court, on the ground-floor. Not a house in Mexico is mentioned by any of the early writers as occupied by a single family. They were evidently joint-tenement houses of the aboriginal American model, each occupied by a number of families ranging from five and ten to one hundred, and perhaps in some cases two hundred families in a house. The largest houses ever constructed in America by the Indians are still to be seen in New Mexico in ruins, one of which, the Pueblo Bonito, contained over six hundred apartments.† The village consisted of a single house constructed on three sides of a court.

Two of the houses in Mexico were more particularly noticed by the soldiers of Cortes than others,—that in which they were quartered, and that in which Montezuma lived. Neither can be said to have been described. I shall confine myself to these two structures.

Cortes made his first entry into Mexico in November, 1519,

* History of Mexico, II. 232.

† Report of Lieutenant, now General J. H. Simpson, U. S. Senate Ex. Doc. No 54, 31st Congress, 1st Session, 1850.

with four hundred and fifty Spaniards, according to Bernal Dia ,* accompanied by a thousand Tlascalcan allies. They were lodged in a vacant palace of Montezuma's late father, Diaz naively remarks, observing that "the whole of this palace was very light, airy, clean, and pleasant, the entry being through a great court." † Cortes, after describing his reception, informs us that Montezuma "returned along the street in the order already described, until he reached a very large and splendid palace in which we were to be quartered. He then took me by the hand and led me into a spacious saloon, in front of which was a court through which we had entered." ‡ So much for the statements of two eyewitnesses. Herrera gathered some additional particulars. He states that "they came to a very large court, which was the wardrobe of the idols, and had been the house of Axayacatzin, Montezuma's father. . . . Being lodged in so large a house, that, though it seems incredible, contained so many capacious rooms, with bedchambers, that one hundred and fifty Spaniards could all lie single. It was also worth observing that though the house was so big, every part of it to the last corner was very clean, neat, matted, and hung with hangings of cotton and feather work of several colors, and had beds and mats with pavilions over them. No man of whatsoever quality having any other sort of bed, no other being used." In the tidiness of these rooms we gain some evidence of the character of Aztec women.

Joint-tenement houses, and the mode of life they indicate, were at this time unknown in Europe. They belonged to a more ancient condition of society. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Spaniards, astonished at their magnitude, should have styled them palaces, and having been received with a military array by Montezuma, as the general commander of the Aztec forces, shou'd have regarded him as a king, since monarchical government was the form with which they were chiefly acquainted. Suffice it then to say that one of the great houses of the Aztecs was large enough to accommodate Cortes and his fourteen hundred and fifty men, as they had previously been

* Conquest of Mex. Ed, 1803, Keatinge's Trans., I. 181, 189, Herrera says, 300, II. 327.

† Diaz, I. 191.

‡ Despatches of Cortes, Folsom's Trans. p. 86.

accommodated in one Cholulan house, and elsewhere on the way to Mexico. From New Mexico to the Isthmus of Panama there was scarcely a principal village in which an equal number could not have found accommodations in a single house. When it is found to be unnecessary to call it a palace in order to account for its size, we are led to the conclusion that an ordinary Aztec house was emptied of its inhabitants to make room for their unwelcome visitors. After their reception, Aztec hospitality supplied them with provisions.

We are next to consider the second so-called palace, that in which Montezuma lived, and the dinner of Montezuma which these soldiers witnessed, and which has gone into history as a part of the evidence that a monarchy of the feudal type existed in Mexico. They had but little time to make their observations, for this imaginary kingdom perished almost immediately, and the people in the main dispersed.

On the seventh day after the entry into Mexico, Montezuma was induced by intimidation to leave the house in which he lived and take up his quarters with Cortes, where he was held a prisoner until his death, which occurred a few weeks later.* Whatever was seen of his mode of life in his usual place of residence was practically limited to the five days between the coming of the Spaniards and his capture. Our knowledge of the facts is in the main derived from what these soldiers reported upon slight and imperfect means of observation. Bernal Diaz and Cortes have left us an extraordinary description, not of his residence, but of his daily life, and more particularly of the dinner which has been made the subject of this article. It is worth the attempt to take up the pictures of these and succeeding authors, and see whether the real truth of the matter cannot be elicited from their own statements. There was undoubtedly a basis of facts underneath them, because without such a basis the superstructure could not have been created.

It may with reason be supposed that the Spaniards found Montezuma, with his gentile kindred, in a large joint-tenement house, containing a hundred or more families united in a communal household. The dinner they witnessed was the single daily meal of this household, prepared in a common cook-

* Clavigero's History of Mexico, II, 364.

house from common stores, and divided at the kettle. The dinner of each person was placed in an earthen bowl, with which in his hand an Indian needed neither chair nor table, and, moreover, had neither the one nor the other. The men ate first, and by themselves, Indian fashion; and the women, of whom only a few were seen, afterwards and by themselves. On this hypothesis the dinner in question is susceptible of a satisfactory explanation.

It has been shown that each Aztec community of persons owned lands in common, from which they derived their support. Their mode of tillage and of distribution of the products, whatever it may have been, would have returned to each family or household, large or small, its rightful share. Communism in living in large households composed of related families springs naturally from such a soil. It may be considered a law of their condition, and, plainly enough, the most economical mode of life they could adopt until the idea of property had been sufficiently developed in their minds to lead to the division of lands among individuals with ownership in fee, and power of alienation. Their social system, which tended to unite kindred families in a common household, their ownership of lands in common, and their ownership as a group, of a joint-tenement house; which would necessarily follow, would not admit a right in persons to sell, and thus to introduce strangers into the ownership of such lands or such houses. Lands and houses were owned and held under a common system which entered into their plan of life. The idea of property was forming in their minds, but it was still in that immature state which pertains to the Middle status of barbarism. They had no money, but traded by barter of commodities; very little personal property, and scarcely anything of value to Europeans. They were still a breech-cloth people, wearing this rag of barbarism as the unmistakable evidence of their condition; and the family was in the syndyasmian or pairing form, with separation at any moment at the option of either party. It was the weakness of the family, its inability to face alone the struggle of life, which led to the construction of joint-tenement houses throughout North and South America by the Indian tribes; and it was the gentile organization which

led them to fill these houses, on the principle of kin, with related families.

In a pueblo as large as that of Mexico, which was the largest found in America, and may possibly have contained thirty thousand inhabitants, there must have been a number of large communal houses of different sizes, from those that were called palaces because of their size, to those filled by a few families. Degrees of prosperity are shown in barbarous as well as in civilized life in the quarters of the people. Herrera states that the houses of the poorer sort of people were "small, low, and mean," but that "as small as the houses were, they commonly contained two, four, and six families." * Wherever a household is found in Indian life, be the married pairs composing it few or many, that household practised communism in living. In the largest of these houses it would not follow necessarily that all its inmates lived from common stores, because they might form several household groups in the same house; but in the large household of which Montezuma was a member, it is plain that it was fed from common stores prepared in a common cook-house, and divided from the kettle in earthen bowls, each containing the dinner of a single person. Montezuma was supposed to be absolute master of Mexico, and what they saw at this dinner was interpreted with exclusive reference to him as the central figure. The result is remarkably grotesque. It was their own self-deception, without any assistance from the Aztecs. The accounts given by Diaz and Cortes, and which subsequent writers have built upon with glowing enthusiasm and free additions, is simply the gossip of a camp of soldiers suddenly cast into an earlier form of society, which the Village Indians of America, of all mankind, then best represented. That they could understand it was not to have been expected. Accustomed to monarchy and to privileged classes, the principal Aztec war-chief seemed to them quite naturally a king, and sachems and chiefs followed in their vision as princes and lords. But that they should have remained in history as such for three centuries is an amusing commentary upon the value of historical writings in general.

The so-called palace of Montezuma is not described by Diaz,

* History of America, II. 360.

for the reason, probably, that there was nothing to distinguish it from a number of similar structures in the pueblo. Neither is it described by Cortes or the Anonymous Conqueror; Cortes merely remarking generally that "within the city his palaces were so wonderful that it is hardly possible to describe their beauty and extent; I can only say that in Spain there is nothing equal to them."* Gothic cathedrals were then standing in Spain, the Alhambra in Grenada, and without doubt public and private buildings of dressed stone laid in courses. While the comparison was mendacious, we can understand the desire of the conqueror to magnify his exploits. Herrera, who came later and had additional resources, remarks that the palace in which Montezuma resided "had twenty gates, all of them to the square or market-place, and the principal streets, and three spacious courts, and in one of them a very large fountain. . . . There were many halls one hundred feet in length, and rooms of twenty-five and thirty, and one hundred baths. The timber work was small, without nails, but very fine and strong, which the Spaniards much admired. The walls were of marble, jasper, porphyry, a black sort of stone with red veins like blood, white stone, and another sort that is transparent. The roofs were of wood, well wrought and carved. . . . The rooms were painted and matted, and many of them had rich hangings of cotton and coney wool, or of feather-work. The beds were not answerable to the grandeur of the house and furniture, being poor and wretched, consisting of blankets upon mats or on hay. . . . Few men lie in this palace, but there were one thousand women in it, and some say three thousand, which is reckoned most likely. . . . Montezuma took to himself the ladies that were the daughters of great men, being many in number."†

The external walls of the houses were covered with plaster. From the description it seems probable that in the interior of the large rooms the faces of the stone in the walls were seen here and there, some of the red porous stone, some of marble, and some resembling porphyry, for it is not supposable that they could cut this stone with flint implements. Large stones used on the inner faces of the walls might have been

* Despatches, p. 121.

† History of America, II. 345.

left uncovered, and thus have presented the mottled appearance mentioned. The Aztecs had no structures comparable with those of Yucatan. Their architecture resembles that of New Mexico wherever its features distinctly appear upon evidence that can be trusted. The best rooms found in the latter region are of thin pieces of sandstone prepared by fracture, and laid up with a uniform face, without the use of mortar. Herrera had no occasion to speak of the use of marble and porphyry in the walls of this house in such a vague manner and upon more vague information. The reference to the thousand or more women as forming the harem of Montezuma is a gross libel.

Mr. Hubert H. Bancroft, the last of the long line of writers who have treated the affairs of the Aztecs, has put the finishing touch to this picture in the following language: "The principal palace of the king of Mexico was an irregular pile of low buildings enormous in extent, constructed of huge blocks of *tetzontli*, a kind of porous stone common to that country, cemented with mortar. The arrangement of the buildings was such that they enclosed three great plazas or public squares, in one of which a beautiful fountain incessantly played. Twenty great doors opened on the squares and on the streets, and over these was sculptured in stone the coat-of-arms of the king of Mexico, an eagle gripping in his talons a jaguar. In the interior were many halls, and one in particular is said by a writer who accompanied Cortes, known as the Anonymous Conqueror, to have been of sufficient extent to contain three thousand men. . . . In addition to these were more than one hundred smaller rooms, and the same number of marble baths. . . . The walls and floors of halls and apartments were many of them faced with polished slabs of marble, jasper, obsidian, and white *tecali*; lofty columns of the same fine stones supported marble balconies and porticos, every inch and corner of which was filled with wondrous ornamental carving, or held a grinning, grotesquely sculptured head. The beams and casings were of cedar, cypress, and other valuable woods profusely carved and put together without nails. . . . Superb mats of most exquisite finish were spread upon the marble floors; the tapestry that draped the walls and the curtains that hung be-

fore the windows were made of a fabric most wonderful for its delicate texture, elegant designs, and brilliant colors ; through the halls and corridors a thousand golden censers, in which burned precious spices and perfumes, diffused a subtle odor.”*

Upon this rhapsody it will be sufficient to remark that halls were entirely unknown in Indian architecture. Neither a hall, as that term is used by us, has ever been seen in an Indian house, nor has one been found in the ruins of any Indian structure. An external corridor has occasionally been found in ruins of houses in Central America. Aztec window-curtains of delicate texture, marble baths and porticos, and floors of polished slabs of marble, as figments of a troubled imagination, recall the glowing description of the great kingdom of the Sandwich Islands, with its king, its cabinet ministers, its parliament, its army and navy, which Mark Twain has fitly characterized as “an attempt to navigate a sardine dish with Great Eastern machinery” ; and it suggests also the Indian chief humorously mentioned by Irving as generously “decked out in cocked hat and military coat, in contrast with his breech clout and leathern leggins, being grand officer at top and ragged Indian at bottom.”† Whatever may be said by credulous and enthusiastic authors to decorate this Indian pueblo, its houses, and its breech-cloth people, cannot conceal the “ragged Indian” therein by dressing him in a European costume.

The dinner of Montezuma, witnessed within the five days named by the Spanish soldiers, comes down to us with a slender proportion of reliable facts. The accounts of Bernal Diaz and of Cortes form the basis of all subsequent descriptions.‡ Montezuma was the central figure around whom all the others are made to move. A number of men, as Diaz states, were to be seen in the house and in the courts, going to and fro, a part of whom were thought to be chiefs in attendance upon Montezuma, and the remainder were supposed to be guards. Better proof of the use of guards is needed than the suggestion of Diaz. It implies a knowledge of military discipline unknown by Indian tribes. It was noticed that Indians went barefooted into the presence of Montezuma, which was interpreted as an

* *Native Races of the Pacific States.* Civilized Nations, Vol. II. p. 160.

† Bonneville, p. 34.

‡ The Anonymous Conqueror does not notice it.

act of servility and deference, although bare feet must have been the rule rather than the exception in Tenochtitlan. Diaz further informs us that "his cooks had upwards of thirty different ways of dressing meats, and they had earthen vessels so contrived as to keep them always hot. For the table of Montezuma himself above three hundred dishes were dressed, and for his guards above a thousand. Before dinner Montezuma would go out and inspect the preparations, and his officers would point out to him which were the best, and explain of what birds and flesh they were composed; and of these he would eat. . . . Montezuma was seated on a low throne or chair at a table proportionate to the height of his seat. The table was covered with white cloth and napkins, and four beautiful women presented him with water for his hands in vessels which they called Xicales, with other vessels under them like plates to catch the water; they also presented him with towels. Then two other women brought him small cakes of bread, and when the king began to eat, a large screen of wood-gilt was placed before him, so that people should not during that time see him. The women having retired to a little distance, four ancient lords stood by the throne, to whom Montezuma from time to time spoke or addressed questions, and as a matter of particular favor gave to each of them a plate of that which he was eating. . . . This was served on earthenware of Cholula, red and black. . . . I observed a number of jars, about fifty, brought in filled with foaming chocolate, of which he took some which the women presented to him. During the time Montezuma was at dinner, two very beautiful women were busily employed making small cakes, with eggs and other things mixed therein. These were delicately white, and when made they presented them to him on plates covered with napkins. Also another kind of bread was brought to him in long loaves, and plates of cakes resembling wafers. After he had dined they presented to him three little canes, highly ornamented, containing liquid amber mixed with an herb they call tobacco; and when he had sufficiently viewed the singers, dancers, and buffoons, he took a little of the smoke of one of these canes and then laid himself down to sleep; and thus his principal meal concluded. After this was over, all his guards

and domestics sat down to dinner, and as near as I can judge, above a thousand plates of these eatables that I have mentioned were laid before them, with vessels of foaming chocolate, and fruit in immense quantity. For his women and various inferior servants, his establishment was a prodigious expense, and we were astonished, amid such a profusion, at the vast regularity that prevailed.”* Diaz wrote his history more than thirty years after the conquest (he says he was writing it in 1568),† which may serve to excuse him for implying the use of veritable chairs and a table where neither existed, and for describing the remainder as sitting down to dinner. Tezozomoc, who is followed by Herrera, says the table of Montezuma consisted of two skins. How they were fastened together and supported does not appear.

The statements in the Despatches of Cortes, as they now appear, are an improvement upon Diaz, the pitch being on a higher key. He remarks that Montezuma “was served in the following manner: Every day, as soon as it was light, six hundred nobles and men of rank were in attendance at the palace, who either sat or walked about in the halls and galleries, and passed their time in conversation, but without entering the apartment where his person was. The servants and attendants of these nobles remained in the court-yards, of which there were two or three of great extent, and in the adjoining street, which was also very spacious. They all remained in attendance from morning till night; and when his meals were served, the nobles were likewise served with equal profusion, and their servants and secretaries also had their allowance. Daily his larder and wine-cellar were open to all who wished to eat or drink. The meals were served by three or four hundred youths, who brought in an infinite number of dishes; indeed, whenever he dined or supped the table was loaded with every kind of flesh, fish, fruits and vegetables that the country produced. As the climate is cold, they put a chafing-dish with live coals under every plate and dish, to keep them warm. The meals were served in a large hall in which Montezuma was accustomed to eat, and the dishes quite filled

* History of the Conquest of Mexico, I. 198-202.

† Ib. II. 423.

the room, which was covered with mats, and kept very clean. He sat on a small cushion, curiously wrought of leather. During the meal there were present, at a little distance from him, five or six elderly caciques, to whom he presented some of the food. And there was constantly in attendance one of the servants, who arranged and handed the dishes, and who received from others whatever was wanted for the supply of the table. Both at the beginning and end of every meal, they furnished water for the hands; and the napkins used on these occasions were never used a second time, and this was the case also with the plates and dishes, which were not brought again, but new ones in place of them; it was the same with the chafing-dishes." *

Since cursive writing was unknown among the Aztecs, the presence of these secretaries is an amusing feature in the account. The wine-cellar also is remarkable for two reasons: because the level of the streets and courts was but four feet above the level of the water, which made cellars impossible; and because the Aztecs had no knowledge of wine. An acid beer (pulque), made by fermenting the juice of the maguey, was a common beverage of the Aztecs; but it is hardly supposable that even this was used at dinner. It will be noticed that according to this account the dinner was served to all at the same time; Montezuma and several chiefs eating at one end of the room, but no mention is made of the manner in which the remainder ate. The six hundred men (or less) who remained about the house and courts during the day, we may well suppose, were, with their families, joint residents and joint proprietors with Montezuma of the establishment. Two or three structures are mingled in these descriptions, which were probably entirely distinct in their occupations and uses.

Herrera gathered up the subsequent growth of the story, which undoubtedly made a great sensation in Europe as a part of the picture of life in the New World; and embellished it from sheer delight in a marvellous tale. The few facts stated by Bernal Diaz, expressing the interpretation of the Spanish soldiers, were fruitful seeds planted three hundred years ago, which the imaginations of enthusiastic authors have developed

* Despatches of Cortes, pp. 123.

into a glowing and picturesque narrative. The principal part of Herrera's account runs as follows: "Montezuma did always eat alone, and so great a quantity of meat was served up to his table, such great variety, and so richly dressed, that there was sufficient for all the prime men of his household. His table was a cushion, or two pieces of colored leather; instead of a chair, a little low stool, made of one piece, the seat hollowed out, carved and painted in the best manner that could be; the table-cloth, napkins, and towels of very fine cotton as white as snow, and never served any more than once, being the fees of the proper officers. The meat was brought in by four hundred pages, all gentlemen, sons of lords, and set down together in a hall; the king went thither, and with a rod, or his hand, pointed to what he liked, and then the sewer set it upon the chafing-dishes that it might not be cold; and this he never failed to do, unless the stewards at any time very much recommended to him some particular dishes. Before he sat down, twenty of the most beautiful women came and brought him water to wash his hands, and when seated the sewer did shut a wooded rail that divided the room, lest the nobility that went to see him dine should encumber the table, and he alone set on and took off the dishes, for the pages neither came near nor spoke a word. Strict silence was observed, none daring to speak unless it was some jester, or the person of whom he asked a question. The sewer was always upon his knees and barefooted, attending him without lifting up his eyes. No man with shoes on was to come into the room upon pain of death. The sewer also gave him drink in a cup of several shapes, sometimes of gold, and sometimes of silver, sometimes of gourd, and sometimes of the shells of fishes.* Six ancient lords attended at a distance, to whom he gave some dishes of what he liked best, which they did eat there with much respect. He had always music of flutes, reeds, horns, shells, kettle-drums, and other instruments, nothing agreeable to the ears of Spaniards. . . . There were

* Solis, thinking a cocoanut shell altogether too plain, embellishes the shell with jewels: "He had cups of gold, and salvers of the same; and sometimes he drank out of cocoas and natural shells very richly set with jewels." — *History of the Conquest of Mexico*, Lond., ed. 1738, Townshend's Trans., I. 417.

always at dinner dwarfs, crooked and other deformed persons, to provoke laughter, and they did eat of what was left at the further end of the hall, with the jesters and buffoons. What remained was given to three thousand Indians, that were constantly upon guard in the courts and squares, and therefore there were always three thousand dishes of meat and as many cups of liquor; the larder and cellar were never shut, by reason of their continual carrying in and out. In the kitchen they dressed all sorts of meat that were sold in the market, being a prodigious quantity, besides what was brought in by hunters, tenants, and tributaries. The dishes and all utensils were all of good earthenware, and served the king but once. He had abundance of vessels of gold and silver, yet made no use of them, because they should not serve twice.”*

Further on, and out of its place, Herrera gives us what seems to have been a call of the scattered household to dinner. “When it was dinner-time,” he remarks, “eight or ten men whistled very loud, beating the kettle-drums hard, as it were to warn those that were to dance after dinner; then the dancers came, who, to entertain their great sovereign, were all to be men of quality, clad as richly as they could, with costly mantles, white, red, green, yellow, and some of several colors.”†

The four women of Diaz who brought water to Montezuma have now increased to twenty; but, as the Spanish writers claimed a wide latitude in the matter of numbers, fivefold is not, perhaps, unreasonable, especially as it did not occur to Herrera that Diaz may, at the outset, have quadrupled the actual number. The “three or four hundred youths” who brought in the dinner, according to Cortes, settle down under Herrera to “four hundred pages, all gentlemen, sons of lords”; and here we must recognize the discrimination of the historian, in that he found the highest number stated by Cortes fully adequate to the occasion. Two other things may be noticed: shoes have disappeared from all Indian feet in the face of a terrific penalty; and three thousand hungry Indians stand in peaceful quietude, while their dinner grows cold upon the floor, as Montezuma eats alone in solitary grandeur. No American Indian could be

* History of America, II. 336.

† Ib. 443.

made to comprehend this picture. It lacks the realism of Indian life, and embodies an amount of puerility of which the Indian nature is not susceptible. Europeans and Americans may rise to the height of the occasion because their mental range is wider, and their imaginations have fed more deeply upon nursery-tales. Diaz had contented himself with saying that Montezuma "had two hundred of his nobility on guard in apartments adjoining his own,"* in whom may be recognized his fellow-householders; but Cortes generously increased the number to "six hundred nobles and men of rank," who appeared at daylight and remained in attendance during the day. Neither number, however, was quite sufficient to meet the conceptions of the historiographer of Spain, and accordingly three thousand, all guards, were adopted by Herrera as a suitable number to give *éclat* to Montezuma's dinner. Diaz, however, states that "a thousand plates of those eatables" were set before the guards and domestics. If any man, conversant with Indian character, could show by what instrumentality five hundred Indians could be kept together twelve hours in attendance upon any human being, from a sense of duty, he would add something to our knowledge of the Red Race; and could he prove further that they had actually waited, in the presence of as many earthen bowls, smoking with their several dinners, while their war-chief in the same room was making his repast alone, the verifier would thereby endow the Indian character with an element of forbearance he has never since been known to display. The block of wood hollowed out for a stool or seat may be accepted, for it savors of the simplicity of Indian art. That the Aztecs had napkins of coarse texture, woven by hand, is probable; as also that they were white, because cotton is white. Imagination might easily expand a napkin into a table-cloth, provided a table existed to spread it upon; but in this case, without duly considering the relation between the two, the table-cloth has been created, but the table refuses to appear. The napkin business, therefore, seems to have been slightly overdone. Finally, the call of the scattered household to dinner by kettle-drums and whistling savors too strongly of Indian ways and usages to be diverted into a summons to the dancers, as Herrera suggests. This Aztec dinner-

* History of the Conquest of Mexico, I. 198.

call, on a scale commensurate with a large communal household, would have been lost to history but for the special use discerned in it to decorate a tale. It recognizes the loitering habits of an Aztec household, and perhaps the irregularity of the dinner-hour.

Passing over the descriptions of Sahagun, Clavigero, and Prescott, who have kindled into enthusiasm over this dinner of Montezuma, Mr. Hubert H. Bancroft shall be allowed to furnish us with the very latest version. "Every day," he remarks, "from sunrise until sunset the antechambers of Montezuma's palace in Mexico were occupied by six hundred noblemen and gentlemen, who passed their time lounging about and discussing the gossip of the day in low tones, for it was considered disrespectful to speak loudly or make any noise within the palace limits. They were provided with apartments in the palace, and took their meals from what remained of the superabundance of the royal table, as did after them their own servants, of whom each person of quality was entitled to from one to thirty according to his rank. These retainers, numbering two or three thousand, filled several outer courts during the day. The king took his meals alone in one of the largest halls of the palace. . . . He was seated upon a low leather cushion, upon which were thrown various soft skins, and his table was of a similar description, except that it was larger and rather higher, and was covered with white cotton cloths of the finest texture. The dinner-service was of the finest ware of Cholula, and many of the goblets were of gold and silver, or fashioned with beautiful shells. He is said to have possessed a complete service of solid gold, but as it was considered below a king's dignity to use anything at table twice, Montezuma, with all his extravagance, was obliged to keep this costly dinner-set in the temple. The bill of fare comprised everything edible of fish, flesh, and fowl, that could be procured in the empire or imported beyond it. Relays of couriers were employed in bringing delicacies from afar. . . . There were cunning cooks among the Aztecs, and at these extravagant meals there was almost as much variety in the cookery as in the matter cooked. Sahagun gives a most formidable list of roast, stewed, and broiled dishes, of meat, fish, and poultry, seasoned with many kinds of herbs, of which,

however, that most frequently mentioned is chile. He further describes many kinds of bread, all bearing a more or less close resemblance to the Mexican tortilla, . . . then tamales of all kinds, and many other curious messes, such as frog spawn and stewed ants, cooked with chile. . . . Each dish was kept warm on a chafing-dish placed under it. Writers do not agree as to the exact quantity of food served up at each meal, but it must have been immense, since the lowest number of dishes given is three hundred, and the highest three thousand. They were brought into the hall by four hundred pages of noble birth, who placed their burdens upon the matted floor and retired noiselessly. The king then pointed out such viands as he wished to partake of, or left the selection to his steward, who doubtless took pains to study the likes and dislikes of the royal palate. The steward was a functionary of the highest rank and importance; he alone was privileged to place the designated delicacies before the king upon the table; he appears to have done duty both as royal carver and cup-bearer;* and, according to Torquemada, to have done it barefooted and on his knees. Everything being in readiness, a number of the most beautiful of the king's women entered, bearing water in round vessels called *Xicales*, for the king to wash his hands in, and towels that he might dry them, other vessels being placed upon the ground to catch the drippings. Two other women, at the same time, brought him some small loaves of a very delicate kind of bread, made of the finest maize flour, beaten up with eggs. This done, a wooden screen, carved and gilt, was placed before him that no one might see him while eating. There were always present five or six aged lords, who stood near the royal chair barefooted and with bowed heads. To these, as a special mark of favor, the king occasionally sent a choice morsel from his own plate. During the meal the monarch amused himself by watching the performances of his jugglers and tumblers, whose marvellous feats of strength and dexterity I shall describe in another place; at other times there was dancing accompanied by singing and music. . . . The more solid food was followed by pastry, sweetmeats, and a magnificent dessert of fruit. The only beverage drank was chocolate, of which about fifty jars

* The "cup-bearer" agrees reasonably well with the "window-curtains."

were provided ; it was taken with a spoon, finely wrought of gold or shell, from a goblet of the same material. Having finished his dinner, the king again washed his hands in water brought to him, as before, by the women. After this, several painted and gilt pipes were brought, from which he inhaled, through his mouth or nose, as best suited him, the smoke of a mixture of liquid amber and an herb called tobacco. This siesta over, he devoted himself to business, and proceeded to give audience to foreign ambassadors or deputations from cities in the empire, and to such of his lords and ministers as had business to transact with him." *

In this account, although founded upon those of Diaz and Cortes, and showing nothing essentially new, we have the final growth of the story to the present time, but without any assurance that the limits of its possible expansion have been reached. The purification of our aboriginal history, by casting out the mass of trash with which it is so deeply freighted, is forced upon us to save American intelligence from deserved disgrace. Whatever may be said of the American aborigines in general, or of the Aztecs in particular, they were endowed with common sense in the matter of their daily food, which cost them labor, forethought, and care to provide. The picture of Indian life here presented is simply impossible. Village Indians in the Middle status of barbarism were below the age of tables and chairs for dinner service ; neither had they learned to arrange a dinner to be eaten socially at a common table, or even to share their dinner with their wives and children. Their joint-tenement houses, their common stores, their communism in living, and the separation of the sexes at their meals, are genuine Indian customs and usages which explain this dinner. It was misconceived by the Spaniards quite naturally, and with the grotesque results herein presented ; but there is no excuse for continuing this misconception in the presence of known facts accessible to all.

There is no doubt whatever that Montezuma was treated with great consideration by all classes of persons. Indians respect and venerate their chiefs. As their principal war-chief Montezuma held the highest official position among them. He

* Native Races of the Pacific States, II, 174 - 178.

is represented as amiable, generous, and manly, although unnerved by the sudden appearance and novel and deadly arms of the Spaniards. He had charge of the reception and entertainment of Cortes and his men, who requited him savagely for his hospitality and kindness. But when his home-life is considered, he fared no better than his fellow-householders, sharing with them their common dinner. These accounts, when divested of their misconceptions, render it probable that Montezuma was living with his gentile kinsmen in a house they owned in common; and that what the Spaniards saw was a dinner in common by this household which, with the women and children, may have numbered from five hundred to a thousand persons. When the scattered members of the household had been summoned, the single daily meal was brought in by a number of persons from the common cook-house in earthen bowls and dishes, and set down upon the floor of an apartment used as a place for dinner in the fashion of Indians. Indians as they were, they doubtless took up these bowls one by one, each containing the dinner of one person divided at the kettle. They ate standing, or it may be sitting upon the floor, or upon the ground in the open court. Indians as they were, the men ate first and by themselves, and the women and children afterwards. After dinner was over, they were diverted, probably, with music and dancing, and made themselves merry, as well-fed Indians are apt to do. That the same dinner, conducted in a similar manner, occurred at all the houses in the pueblo, large and small, once a day, there can scarcely be a doubt.

The dinner of Montezuma which has gone into history, and been read for three centuries with wonder and admiration, is an excellent illustration of the slender material out of which American aboriginal history has been made. It shows, moreover, as a warning, what results flow from great misconceptions through the constructive faculty of authors.

A confederacy of three Indian tribes, speaking dialects of the same language, was precisely what the Spaniards found in Mexico, and this was all they found. They had no occasion in their accounts to advance a step beyond this simple fact. A satisfactory explanation of this confederacy can be found in

similar Indian confederacies. It was a growth from the common institutions of the Indian family. Underneath these delusive pictures a council of chiefs is revealed, which was the natural and legitimate instrument of government under Indian institutions. No other form of government was possible among them. They had, beside, which was an equally legitimate part of this system, an elective and deposable war-chief (*Teuchtli*), the power to elect and to depose being held by a fixed constituency ever present, and ready to act when occasion required. The Aztec organization stood plainly before the Spaniards as a confederacy of Indian tribes. Nothing but the grossest perversion of obvious facts could have enabled Spanish writers to fabricate the Aztec monarchy out of a democratic organization.

Without ascertaining the unit of their social system, if organized in *gentes*, as they probably were, and without gaining any knowledge of the organization that did exist, they boldly invented for the Aztecs a monarchy, with high feudal characteristics, out of the reception of Cortes by their principal war-chief, and such other flimsy materials as Montezuma's dinner. This misconception has stood, through American indolence, quite as long as it deserves to stand.

When we have learned to speak of the American Indians in language adapted to Indian life and Indian institutions, they will become comprehensible. So long as we apply to their social organizations and domestic institutions terms adapted to the organizations and to the institutions of civilized society, we caricature the Indians and deceive ourselves. There was neither a political society, nor a state, nor any civilization in America when it was discovered; and, excluding the Eskimos, but one race of Indians, the Red Race.

LEWIS H. MORGAN.